

BELFORD'S MAGAZINE

CONTENTS.

THE RACE PROBLEM. <i>T. T. Fortune and J. T. Searcy, M.D.</i>	
WINNING A WIFE IN LOUISIANA IN THE OLDEN TIME. <i>C. Gayarré</i>	
A SHADOW: A Poem,	<i>Clinton Scollard</i>
GYMNASTIC SYSTEMS,	<i>Julian Hawthorne</i>
THE RECENT ENGLISH IMPRESS ON AMERICAN LIFE,	<i>James W. Gerard</i>
AT ERCILDOUNE. A Poem,	<i>Katharine Tynan</i>
CELEBRATED MEN OF THE DAY: V. General Gordon: The Hero and the Man,	<i>Col. C. Chaillé-Long</i>
WHEN TWILIGHT FALLS: A Rondeau,	<i>Sandborn G. Tenney</i>
NO CHAPERON NEED APPLY: A Story,	<i>Celia Logan</i>
EDITORS THAT I HAVE KNOWN: Part II. (Conclusion),	<i>Alexander Wilder, M.D.</i>
A PLEA FOR STATE RIGHTS,	<i>Edward N. Vollandigham</i>
MR. EDMUNDS'S STORY,	<i>Adele M. Garrigues</i>
IS THE EARTH A SNOW-BALL?	<i>H. H. Ballard</i>
PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S ENTRY INTO RICHMOND: Part I.,	<i>Admiral Porter, U. S. N.</i>
SACRIFICIUM: A Poem,	<i>Helen Grace Smith</i>
TINWARE AND THE TARIFF,	<i>Kanawha</i>
INTELLECTUAL CAVE-DWELLERS,	<i>John Moran</i>
MEMOIRS AND MEMORIES OF JOHN C. FREMONT: Part I.,	<i>Donn Platt</i>
THE TRUTH ABOUT BARBARA FRITCHIE,	<i>Robert Smith</i>
WOMAN FROM HER OWN STANDPOINT,	<i>Marie</i>
HON. LYMAN TRUMBULL ON STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS,	<i>A. W. Clason</i>
LOVE AND REASON: A Poem,	<i>Jeanne O. Benson</i>
CIVIL SERVICE REFORM. <i>Roger Ellis,</i>	<i>Independent Department</i>
THE REFERENDUM. <i>Isaac Verdaum,</i>	
PROTECTION AND FREE-TRADE. <i>Joseph North,</i>	
TWILIGHT: A Sonnet,	<i>Maud Wyman</i>
A DESPERATE GAME,	<i>Editorial</i>
THE LONGEST WAR,	
A FRIEND OF THE NEGRO,	
SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY AND DELEGATED POWER,	
PASSING NOTES AND BRIC-A-BRAC,	
"THE KREUTZER SONATA," by Count Leo Tolstoy,	<i>Review</i>
"A DAUGHTER OF SILENCE," by Edgar Fawcett,	
"YOUNG," by Lafcadio Hearn,	
"THE ART OF AUTHORSHIP," by George Balinton,	
"A STRIKE BY THE MILLIONAIRES AGAINST THE MINERS," by Henry D. Lloyd,	
"SYRLIN," by Ouida,	
"AN OCULAR DELUSION," by Frank H. Howe,	
BOOK NOTICES. HUMOROUS.	

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WESTERN AGENTS.

MEMOIRS AND MEMORIES OF JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT.

PART I.

THERE was a time, in the memory of men yet living, when Boston was the heart of our civilization, and Ohio a border State. The inhabitants of New England looked on Ohio as a wilderness of dense forests, and its inhabitants as semi-barbarous adventurers, fighting Indians, and depending mainly on the hunt for subsistence. There was more truth than poetry in the belief. The sparse population of hardy pioneers, cleaving to the watercourses, slowly worked their way into the wilds with axe and rifle. The rude steamer of that early day, laden with human freight and fraught with peril, breasted the currents of mighty rivers, since called by Calhoun "inland seas," while beyond the Ohio and Mississippi stretched a vast territory almost as unknown to our immediate fathers as the interior of Africa is to us to-day.

That all this has changed, and in so short a period, excites wonder, and the story of it reads like a romance. The wilderness of the West has disappeared, and a score of millions of busy men now cover the land. The forests have been swept away, the swamps have been drained, while a vast farm, the home of an industrious and thriving population, stretches to the Rocky Mountains, and beyond, upon their western slopes, to the Pacific. One is never out of hearing of the shrill scream of the locomotive that, as Hawthorne said,

"Darts like a shuttle through the loom of trade."

Inland cities of extended trade and great wealth mark the centres of distribution for products, while the Northwest, in riches, intellect, and enterprise, makes an element of power, dominating the country and controlling its government.

This view of our material progress as a people fascinates the ordinary spectator, and is continually pointed to as conclusive evidence of our prosperity and the excellence of our institutions. To the more thoughtful, however, there comes at least hesitation, if not doubt, as to this. To the philosophical looker-on, the rapid occupation of the vast domain of virgin soil is to be deplored. Our so-called self-government, erected by the fathers of the Revolution, was an experiment. Humanity, through all the ages, had learned that it was possible for one man to govern another, but the fathers sought to

establish as a fact the theory that the man could govern himself. Against the endeavor was the experience of humanity, as well as the example given us in our religion. How far the people making up the United States could succeed as a democracy, in the face of such experience and example, remained to be shown after the government had been solemnly dedicated.

Toward the success of such an undertaking the wide public domain, till then unoccupied, was a great assistance. The great obstacle in the way of the success of a republican organization is not so much the inequality of political rights as that of property. A man may have all the rights awarded him under the Constitution—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—and yet be a slave. Poor old Shylock expressed this when he said, so pathetically, to his pettifogging despots:

“Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that;
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.”

The old dreary system of capital and labor, so long dominant in Europe, had no existence in the sparse settlements of the States that had beyond them a region where labor could find a home and a living. While the West remained a wilderness a millionaire was a curiosity. I remember when the wealth of Astor and Girard was spoken of as something wonderful. Now, could the resources of our vast domain have been held as a safety-valve, so to speak, for two or three hundred years, the experiment of the fathers might have ripened into a fact accomplished, for it would have had a hardy, thoughtful people to respond to its demands and, in a quiet, conservative manner, correct its evils.

This would certainly have been the result, for the pioneers differed widely from the immigrants. The life of the earlier settlers of the country, before the steamboat and railroad appeared to facilitate transportation, and make comparatively easy the conquest of the wilds, was one of peril and privation. The pioneer went out armed with rifle and axe, and the one meant danger and the other toil. The brave fellow took his life in his hand, and not only this, but subjected his family to all he was himself called on to suffer.

Cooper and other dealers in fiction have thrown a glamour of romance about this pioneer life that makes it seem Arcadian. The hardy men who climbed the Alleghanies in their rude wagons, after many days of toil and exposure reached Pittsburgh. There embark-

ing on a broad-horn, as it was called then, they did not float smoothly down the unknown Ohio, but toiled all day at the long oars, and, tying up to the bank at night, took turns with each other watching through the hours of darkness for hostile Indians. That long tin-horn, which has passed into poetry which tells us,

“That strain he wound his way to cheer,
At dewy eve and golden morn ;
The startled Indian paused to hear,
In echoes soft, that mellow horn,”

was not an instrument of music to the pioneer, who had not so keen an ear for melody as he had for Indians. The horn was utilized as a means of giving signals. In this way the pilot in command of the fleet gave notice to tie up for the night, and again when to start in the morning. To this the other boatmen responded with their horns, and now and then the notes would sound to give warning of danger or distress. The men following the river as pilots returned to Pittsburgh through the wilderness without permission from the Indians, who made the journey extremely dangerous, and so, braving many perils, came in time to be noted characters.

When the family or little colony arrived at its destination the real hardships began. If in a comparatively open country, malaria, caused by decaying vegetation, brought sickness in addition to hard labor ; and if in the woods, an opening had to be made by the severest toil before corn could be grown. What this task meant few now can appreciate. Looking over the broad fields of golden grain, deep green meadows, and beautiful woodland pastures, it is hard to realize the immense amount of labor required to fell and clear away the almost impenetrable forest of trees measuring from two to four feet in diameter, and that with only the axe in the hands of the settler.

It is a popular delusion which claims that this life was health-giving. Exposed to the bitter cold of winter without adequate clothing, sheltered in rudely constructed cabins, where the snow drifted in through openings between the logs, or the rains soaked through the indifferent clapboard roof, the pioneer suffered from rheumatism and kindred diseases, while under the hot summer sun every breath of air was laden with malarial fever. As a rule sickness prevailed, and the death-rate was frightful, especially among children. Only the stronger natures survived. Because here and there a pioneer lived to an extraordinary old age, we come to the erroneous conclusion that their mode of life was healthful, taking no account of the number that fell, nor of the fact that the rude doctor of that day, if one could

be had, added, through his purging, blistering, and blood-letting, to the mortality. Through all this struggle for existence the nobler elements of humanity were developed. A kindly feeling was kindled into life among neighbors, which made all ready to assist in the building of a cabin, the rolling together of logs for burning, or other work beyond the power of one man.

One must note the difference between the pioneer above described and the immigrant from Europe, to appreciate the reason why it would have been better for the Republic had this wide domain been reserved for pioneers only. This not alone because the unoccupied land would have served as a refuge for labor from the greed and tyranny of oppressive capital while the Republic was making its experiment, but the citizenship thus developed would have been of the highest and best. As our fathers braved the dangers of an unknown sea in their noble efforts to find a free soil, so their children, in climbing mountains, working their way down great rivers, and penetrating the wilderness, brought out and gave training to all the stronger qualities that go to make our national manhood.

The immigrants, on the other hand, driven hither by a scarcity of work at home, are carried to our shores in huge steamers, and are then taken up by our railroads to be distributed over the West as laborers. There is no educational or training process. They come merely to swell our population, and to give to capital the same power in the United States from which they suffered in Europe. As a consequence the public domain is gone, and the already crowded land has its millionaires on one side, and its pauper laborers on the other. The tramp has taken the place of the pioneer; and the old war of the masses against the classes is as well-defined in our new land as in the old realms of Europe.

In the old pioneer times the few legislators elected in the sparsely settled West and a portion of the South wended their way by easy stages across the Alleghanies to the national capital. Under some rather indifferent clauses of the Constitution, Congress was then feeling its way over the mountains to the wide domain beyond, and by economical expenditure had made a thin line of pike, called the national road, along which the Solons paced slowly, while discussing with much heat the power of Congress to make any such improvement. Along that same road, not only over the mountains but through the Constitution, have since travelled the enormous river and harbor appropriations by which the money accumulated through a most iniquitous system of taxation is used by members to further their political ambitions.

Along this pike rode Henry Clay, the witty and eloquent Tom Corwin, the popular idol Andrew Jackson, and other public men well known to the people of their day, and widely remembered by their children. One among these, but not of them, for he went his way through life "solitary and alone," was a man who did more to stamp his individuality upon the great Northwest than all the others combined. Thomas H. Benton, or, as he was popularly called, Tom Benton, was a leader of men, possessing great force of character. He had a body capable of enduring great labor, with a brain full of grand ideas and a sublime egotism. He believed in God from an early training by a Christian mother, and he believed in Tom Benton. A man of the highest courage, he had a head that indicated aggressiveness, an aggressiveness restrained only by his own sweet will. The high, broad forehead was marked by a prominent Roman nose, and sustained by a heavy, projecting jaw. The times in which he lived and the rivalries to be encountered made the pistol a part of every man's wear, and no one was readier in its use than the turbulent Senator from Missouri.

"Solitary and alone" this remarkable man wended his way on horseback to Washington, revolving in his mind vast projects and great measures, which, finding expression in the Senate, won for him the reputation of a visionary. He alone heard the tramp of the coming millions; he alone looked over the unknown wastes to the Pacific slope, and warned the incredulous government of the necessity of securing a foothold at the further verge of the continent. To explore the then untrodden wilds, and to secure by treaty a hold upon the Pacific coast, made the ambition of his life. To his exertions, then, and to those of his co-worker, John Charles Frémont, the popular Pathfinder, who has just passed away from among us, we are indebted for our possession of California.

On October 19th, 1841, a slender, unknown lieutenant of the army wooed and won "the fair Jessica," second daughter of Senator Benton, and, as the winning had met with opposition from the more prudent parents, stole his lady-love from the guarded household, married her first, and sought the parental forgiveness and blessing afterward. The Senator made the best of what he thought a bad bargain, first taking the youth into his employ, and soon after into his confidence, for he found that the young man had in him many of the qualities that had given the indignant parent his eminent position. He had Frémont put in command of the first expedition that came after the one of Clark and Williams, and in so doing not only made the daring Pathfinder for the millions that were so soon to

come and develop the domain he found, but opened to the youth a life of romance that makes this huge volume* read like a novel.

The force of character of Thomas H. Benton, somewhat softened, and his intellectual qualities, much refined, were continued in his daughter, and Jessie Benton Frémont makes so much of the recorded life of John Charles that these memoirs would have been but half told if she had been omitted. The view given to the reader in the engravings of this charming book fails to do justice to Mrs. Frémont. Her living head is strikingly lovely. Her face, unmarked by time, but strong in sense and sensibility, is framed by an abundance of snow-white hair that has all the effect of the powder used by the old masters to soften the expression, and one looks only to be impressed, as by some pictured dame of a past age, into a feeling that the face has its history of marked events and winning influences. The tender graces of womanly affection that soften the intellectual expression make a combination of rare excellence in this lovely countenance.

Jessie and John Charles Frémont took up life where Senator Benton laid it down, and the children resolved into reality what had been the dream of the father. To penetrate the vast stretch of wilderness, and open the West to the tread of civilization, was the task they imposed upon themselves. Frémont was to be the Pathfinder, and no man better fitted for the work could have been found. Of Huguenot blood, grafted upon English stock, he had the staying powers of the latter, and the dash, enterprise, and genius of the former. Beginning life with no other advantages than those belonging to a healthy, gifted brain, and great force of character, he graduated into a leader of men in the direction of great enterprises.

How the Pathfinder worked and what he accomplished toward the conquest of half a continent General Frémont tells in this, the first volume of his memoirs. It has all the fascination of fiction from the pen of genius. The strange characters and great perils of the wild life crowd the pages, and hold the attention entranced to the end. Style is thought, and the charm of the work is not only in what the author has to tell, but in his way of telling it. Clear, simple, and incisive, the story is told in the most admirable manner, without any appearance of effort at fine writing. Ninety-nine out of a hundred will read as a child reads Robinson Crusoe, without being conscious of the charm that holds one.

The closing pages of the first volume of these memoirs are given to the conquest of California. Frémont was in Oregon prosecuting

* *Memoirs of My Life*, fully illustrated, by John Charles Frémont. Belford-Clarke Co., publishers, Chicago.

his civil explorations when the war between the United States and Mexico began. He received information of the opening of hostilities from the Rio Grande, where the fighting began, before it reached him from Washington. He tells of the rapidity with which messages were carried by runners of Indian blood, through Mexican provinces, and how, learning the fact of the armed conflict, he immediately made his way to the Mexican dominions.

It was well for our government that he did move in that direction. Frémont had in himself developed by training all the elements of a leader, and he possessed the disposition to assume risks and responsibilities which distinguished him through life. Taught by Benton, and by his own thoughtful observation, the importance of the Pacific coast to our country, he returned to California with but one intent, and that was to seize and hold this outlying Mexican province. It was a bold determination for a man commanding a mere handful of hunters and trappers, in advance of any declaration of war. But with him to determine was to act promptly and decisively.

California was sparsely settled at the time, and entirely devoted to the agricultural and grazing pursuits peculiar to the Mexicans. A few families possessed the rich, deep soil, under a climate more genial than any other on our continent. Each family held a wide domain, and exercised over it all the sway of a landlord, and all were indolent and at the same time simple and hospitable. The region so far from the central government rejoiced in a quasi independence. The inhabitants made, through custom, their own laws, and the tribute they paid to the government at Mexico by taxation was small and uncertain. They had no distributing centres, and needed none, for their wants were limited almost to what they produced. Trade outside of home there was little or none, so they built no cities and improved no harbors. The Mexicans of Spanish blood were the masters, and the Indians and mixed breeds the subjects. Into the midst of this population a few Anglo-Saxons and Celts had forced themselves, and upon these Frémont relied to recruit his little force and perfect his conquest.

His appearance at San Francisco was signalled by the hoisting of our flag over forts and custom house, under the very guns of an English man-of-war lying in the harbor, and in the astonished face of Commodore John D. Sloat, who with three ships of our navy floated by the side of the Englishman. When Frémont reported to our commodore, the wondering naval gentleman asked him for his authority, and when Frémont informed him that he had none other than might be found in his being in the government service, and a citi-

zen of the United States, the over-cautious commodore refused him coöperation. The Secretary of the Navy subsequently censured Sloat severely for his conduct ; but all the mischief that followed in needless hostilities that made a bad impression on the people of California came of this refusal.

The "Regulars," as the army and navy came to be called after a time, very nearly proved fatal to Frémont's bold move. After Sloat had sailed away General Phil. Kearney appeared upon the scene. Kearney's first act was to turn back the famous Kit Carson, who had been started to Washington as bearer of despatches announcing to our Government the conquest of California, and asking for aid to make secure the armed possession. His next move was to plunge into an unequal fight, in which he was not only whipped, but cooped up on a barren knob, where he would have been starved into a surrender but for the almost superhuman efforts of Frémont and his little army.

That Kearney, long after, should have sought to deprive Frémont of the credit his wise and gallant conduct won for him only goes to prove how much our virtue is dependent on our environment. Amid the surroundings of civilized life truth is far more solid and stanch than on the far distant border where it depends for support on the eye of God and a man's inner conscience. Kearney lived, or rather died, ashamed of his false assertions, when upon the floor of the Senate his fraudulent claims were denounced by Senator Benton, and the truth of history was vindicated by that then august body of Solons. The only tinge of bitterness that marks this volume appears in Frémont's treatment of Kearney, and we can well pardon it when we remember the audacious assumption of the dead soldier that was based on the coolest lying.

The generous sense of justice, and the strange fairness of General Frémont, in treating of past events shows in the picture he presents of California at the time he flung out our flag over its quiet and happy borders. He saw the patriarchal homes of the rural potentates, the old missions, where for generations pious men of the Church aided in the conquest of a land from barbarism by teaching and training its children in the ways of peace. He dwells with loving sorrow upon the failure of Father MacNamara to colonize the land with Irish Catholics, or he writes by the lurid glare of the violence, crime, and blood that, stimulated by the greed for gold, swarmed into life under the flag he was the first to unfold over that Arcadia of Nature's and the Church's creation.

DONN PIATT.



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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. President Lincoln's Entry into Richmond: Part II. (<i>Conclusion</i>) - - -	Admiral Porter, U. S. N. - - - 649
II. Doubt: A Poem - - -	Clinton Scollard - - - 658
III. A Comedy of Errors: A Story - - -	Helen W. Pierson - - - 659
IV. The New "Political Science" - - -	B. J. Sage - - - 671
V. Foreclosed: A Story - - -	Le Roy Armstrong - - - 681
VI. Celebrated Men of the Day: VI. Matthew F. Maury - - -	A. J. Little - - - 691
VII. Irrigation and Legislation - - -	Richard J. Hinton - - - 695
VIII. The Humors of the Texas Steer - - -	James Steele - - - 705
IX. Early Discoveries of America: Part I. - - -	Captain W. H. Parker - - - 715
X. The Lion's Cub: A Poem - - -	Richard H. Stoddard - - - 730
XI. The Quicksands of Toro: A Story - - -	Charles H. Shinn - - - 735
XII. Memoirs and Memories of John Charles Frémont: Part II. (<i>Conclusion</i>) - - -	Donn Piatt - - - 739
XIII. Esthetics and Eating - - -	Lalage D. Morgan - - - 751
XIV. A Scientific Counterplot: A Story - - -	A. D. Redmond - - - 760
XV. Independent Department:	
Our Kings of Lines - - -	Oliver Treeed - - - 764
State Rights vs. Centralization - - -	J. L. McWhorter - - - 765
What is "Justice" to the South? - - -	R. C. Eldridge - - - 767
A National Revenue Congress - - -	J. F. Ferguson - - - 770
Hon. Thomas B. Reed - - -	B. De Casseres - - - 775
Interest - - -	J. S. Watters - - - 777
The Servant-girl Question - - -	A. Lecompte - - - 781
"Who Fought our Civil War?" - - -	A. B. Rohrbaugh - - - 782
XVI. Sunset on a Misty Evening: A Sonnet - - -	E. W. Taylor - - - 783
XVII. Editorial Department:	
A Family Quarrel - - -	- - - 784
Reciprocity - - -	- - - 786
George W. Peck for Governor of Wisconsin - - -	- - - 787
XVIII. Passing Notes and Bric-a-Brac - - -	- - - 788
XIX. Reviews:	
"The Days of My Youth," by François Coppée - - -	- - - 796
"Live Questions," by John P. Atgeld - - -	- - - 799
"The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," by F. M. Whistler - - -	- - - 800
"Shadows and Ideals," by F. S. Saltus - - -	- - - 801
"Cæsar's Column," by E. Boisgilbert, M.D. - - -	- - - 803
"Articles and Discussions on the Labor Question," by Wheelbarrow - - -	- - - 805
"The Blind Men and the Devil," by Plineas - - -	- - - 806
XX. Book Notices - - -	- - - 807
XXI. Humorous: Advertising pages - - -	4, 6, 7, 8, 11

"Your father told me to take this road, Tessa," said the young sheriff.

"Yes, I know that, and I heard one of the men tell him to-day that the bar was swept out."

There was a long silence between them.

"Tessa, go with me to San Luis," said Warren, "and let us be married."

And Tessa went.

Old Stoner heard the news a few days later. Within an hour he had "retired from business." The camp was broken up, the hunters disappeared, mysterious lights flashed at intervals all night from the points of the cliff, and the next day old Stoner himself disappeared, leaving his family, the ranch, and the live-stock. It was said that he made the best of his way to Mexico, and finally to South America. The world is large as yet, and men who have money can ramble over a good deal of it without finding a past they wish to escape from. But Tessa lives in her San Luis, Obispo, cottage, with orange-trees over it, and La Marque roses on the porch, and she thinks herself the happiest woman in California.

CHARLES HOWARD SHINN.

NILES, CAL.

MEMOIRS AND MEMORIES OF JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT.*

PART II. (*Conclusion*).

THE first volume of Frémont's memoirs ends with the conquest of California. He died while preparing the second for the press. That such should be a fact is a national calamity.† Through it we have lost the light upon grave political and military events that the experience and intelligence of a remarkable actor could have given us. When the first convention of the newly-formed Free-soil party met to nominate a candidate for the presidency, John Charles Frémont was unanimously chosen. When the Civil War broke upon us, the same popular impulse selected the Pathfinder as the leader of our armies. He was defeated in the presidential race by the cold, conservative element that made up the old Whig party. The same malign influ

* *Memoirs of My Life*, fully illustrated, by John Charles Frémont. Vol. I. Belford-Clarke Company, publishers, Chicago.

† We believe the General has left his papers in such shape as to enable Mrs. Frémont to complete the memoirs.—ED.

ence denied him an opening in the war. Simon Cameron, first Secretary of War under Lincoln, had no use for a man who would have all the renown he might win in the war as an indorsement for the presidency when that war should end. President Lincoln took about the same view of the situation. Then again, West Point, given immediate control of all military affairs, instinctively hated one who rose to eminence as a captain outside their little school on the Hudson, where everything is taught except patriotism and the art of war.

In response to the popular cry, however, Frémont was given a high command in the army, with headquarters at St. Louis. He claimed, late in life, that the harsh criticism awarded him for not hurrying at once to his post was unjust; that he was delayed by not receiving instructions. The president could not comprehend what instructions were necessary to a general given a commission and a department. The fact is that Frémont remained at New York, expecting to be called to Washington, not for instructions, but to be consulted by the administration as to the political situation. Believing that the first thing to be done was a proclamation freeing all the slaves, it turned out that he was counting on a president who believed that to be the last thing—if it were done at all. So far as the military side was concerned, we had drifted into the war, and the drift continued until the war ended. Every general, every war governor, had a scheme of his own that was not only senseless in itself, but generally in antagonism to every other. There was but one man whose large, healthy brain took in the situation and saw the one objective point, which, if secured, would shorten if not end the war, and that was General George H. Thomas. Frémont, however, had some original ideas, and one, especially, which he put in execution in spite of West Point and the War Department, and which gave us Forts Henry and Donelson, and Nashville, and unfortunately gave us also U. S. Grant as President of the United States.

John Charles Frémont was not the sort of man for Abraham Lincoln to accept as an adviser. The rail-splitter of Illinois was nominated by chance, and elected from necessity. Having selected his cabinet, his first task was to conquer its members; that is, to teach Everard, Chase, and Cameron that he was president. Lincoln was a minority president, and not popular with his own party. That party, made up mainly of old Whigs, an organization that claimed all the intelligence and decency of the country, looked down in distrust and with no little disgust on the long, lanky, vulgar humorist. Their only hope was in the Cabinet, and in the belief that the Cabinet would control the unpleasant president. Lincoln was in the midst of this sort of con-

test when General Frémont appeared upon the scene. The qualities that made him eminent were not of a sort to conciliate the president. Once, with a merry twinkle in his cavernous eyes, he said: "John Charles knows too much." It was not, however, the excess of information so much as the high valuation placed on it by the possessor that made him objectionable.

General Frémont at last repaired to St. Louis and organized a headquarters and staff on a scale of extravagant display that discounted those of McClellan. Great campaigns were planned that were never executed. Fortifications were begun that if completed would have called for fifty thousand men to man effectively. All the time the little General was being called on to march out and fight, and all the time the General was demanding equipments for troops that were never equipped.

This neglect of our army came much from inability—the army of the Potomac consuming the supplies—and more from distrust. The West Pointers were not slow to learn the state of feeling at Washington, and hastened to add fuel to the flame. Criticisms, in writing, which Frémont never saw until they appeared in Hayes's "*Life of Lincoln*," were forwarded to Washington and had their effect. At last Frémont himself made a move that forced the president to relieve him. That move came in the form of an order freeing the slaves of Missouri. That was a political usurpation on the part of the little Pathfinder which Lincoln could not tolerate, and so the popular leader was relegated to the rear. It was a dignified retirement, being the command of the Mountain Department, a poetical name for a mountain retreat.

It was at St. Louis that General Frémont conceived the happy idea of ironclads with which to penetrate the South on its navigable streams. It is well for us to-day that this able man did not wait for authority from Washington to do this work. The project was ridiculed and opposed by both army and navy. In the face of this Frémont made contracts with Eads and others, and before the administration could arrest the work, the boats were completed, manned, and under orders. The result was the fall of Paducah, Forts Henry and Donelson, and the capture of Nashville, to say nothing of what was done upon the Mississippi long subsequent. Up to that time armored vessels had been an experiment. Frémont and Ericsson put the theory to a practical trial.

It seems to be a law of our being to not only shrink from but make war upon change. We find it better to bear the ills we have than, in attempted betterment, run the risk of ills we know not of.

The man suspected of looking forward instead of backward is doomed. Such a man is visionary and not to be trusted. The practical men condemn such with lofty scorn. The practical man, for instance, who does all his business through a telegraph, invented by a visionary, now known as a crank; who converses through a telephone with a customer a hundred miles away, that came of a crank's brain; who has his produce caught up by a locomotive and whirled on to market at the rate of thirty miles an hour, that a crank forced on us; who goes to church once in seven days to seek his soul's salvation through the Blessed Saviour, who was done cruelly to death on a charge of being an impious reformer;—this same practical man can find no words expressive enough to condemn and put down the reformer who would add to the blessings already enjoyed.

John Charles Frémont, with all his strong hold on the hearts of the masses, was sneered at both by the politicians and by the full-breasted warriors so suddenly called from obscurity to command. His proposed ironclads were laughed at. The military men, made up of cotton, brass buttons, and commissions, assured us that no such craft could hope to pass fortifications on rivers, where they would be exposed to a heavy fire at short range; and the press took up the sneer, asserting that a plunging fire from high banks would sink the ironclads as rapidly as they came within range. The one was as ignorant of the subject as the other. There is not and cannot be such a thing as a plunging artillery fire; while the gunboats not only went past the forts, but in many instances made the forts untenable. This is what happened at Fort Henry.

We are gradually coming to comprehend the facts and their true significance, as we study the real history of a war, strangely clouded by partisan prejudice. The success of the Republican party after the war turned in a great measure upon the recognition of General Grant as the one great general on the Union side. The Democratic party had selected McClellan as its hero, and between the two all history was obscured or so strangely distorted that one fails to find either facts or the reasons for them.

The capture of Forts Henry and Donelson, followed by the fall of Nashville, set the people at the North wild with excitement, for they were victories in our hour of defeat, when it appeared as if the Southern boasts of superiority in arms were being demonstrated. We were not given the facts clearly enough to adjust the fame due to the real author of the success. This belonged exclusively to Frémont. He conceived the project, and not only made that project practical, but planned the campaign that ended so brilliantly. His much-

despised, abused, and never-paid-for gunboats, under Commodore Foote, shelled the Confederates into a surrender of Fort Henry, because the works were on such low ground that the ironclads had them at their mercy. Grant and his troops had little part in the performance but that of accepting the surrender, with cool audacity, as his act.

While the affair of Fort Henry is painfully obscured, that of Donelson is grotesquely distorted. Foote's gunboats were not so effective as at the first-named place, because of the fort's elevation. The fire opened from the river, and the assaults made by the army, were disastrous failures. Grant had moved direct on Donelson in light marching order, while the fleet sailed around, in expectation of taking the place by surprise. The Confederates were not at all surprised, and could have remained there probably for two years longer, had General Floyd, then in command, so determined. General Grant was gravely embarrassed. He had hurried forward his forces without the necessary equipage for winter, and the weather suddenly turned intensely cold. To fight without food was bad enough, but to sleep without tents, with the mercury near zero, was out of the question. So General Grant issued an order to Commodore Foote to make another demonstration, under which he could retreat. The night preceding the day on which it was purposed to again bombard the fort from the ironclads, General Grant, having given orders to his three Generals, Smith, McClernand, and Wallace, to make no move until directed by himself, disappeared from his headquarters.

General Floyd was not of course acquainted with General Grant's purposed retreat, and knowing that the line of Confederate defence was broken by the fall of Fort Henry, so that he could expect a force of the enemy in his rear at any time, determined to make a sortie in hopes of cutting his way out. It is also claimed that this effort was stimulated by the fear that if captured he would be incontinently executed as a traitor, for his conduct in President Buchanan's cabinet. But, as the military view of the situation is enough to account for his conduct, it is not necessary to go further for so base a one. At daylight, therefore, he marched out, leaving Buckner and a light force to hold the fort, and cover his rear. The brunt of the attack fell upon the forces under McClernand. As these were inferior in numbers. McClernand, although fighting fiercely, was forced to fall back. Now, had Generals Smith and Wallace swung in upon Floyd's thin line under Buckner at any time before noon, the entire force under Floyd, as well as the fort, would have been captured. But these officers were obeying positive orders. They hurried aides

and orderlies, as did McClelland, to Grant's headquarters, only to get in reply that the General was not there, nor did anyone know where he was.

At last General Smith violated orders and moved into the fight. He swept aside the thin line, and soon found himself possessed of the key to the situation. To a flag of truce from General Buckner, asking upon what terms he might surrender, General Smith responded, "Unconditional surrender; if not complied with I will immediately move on your works."

These memorable words, which subsequently elected "Unconditional-surrender" Grant president, were approved of by the man who adopted them as his own, and "who would have disappeared from history," as General Sherman truthfully said, "had their gallant and able author lived to claim them and his proper place in the armies of our country."

And where was General Grant all this time? On a gunboat in earnest consultation with Commodore Foote and a whiskey bottle. From near midnight until next day about 5 P.M. he sat in the cabin of an ironclad, that echoed and shook to the roar of the conflict then going on.

What a melancholy farce it all is, when we come to know and analyze the events that made heroes out of the veriest imbeciles a country was ever cursed with. Called from the profoundest obscurity when the war broke upon us, these full-stomached generals blundered along the stage, shaming us before the world with their frightful disasters, and filling the households of the land with mourning for their crippled and dead. If from our national cemeteries and private graves could be gathered the bones of the brave men needlessly slaughtered, a monument could be built of them tall enough to out-top that to Robert E. Lee at Richmond.

Frémont was a man of ideas. He came next to General George H. Thomas in comprehending the situation. When the silent, solitary, thoughtful Virginian was ordered to report to General Anderson at Bowling Green, Ky., he sought an interview with President Lincoln, and tracing along the map a line from Bowling Green, through Cumberland Gap to Chattanooga, said: "Let me organize a force of twenty thousand men, and I will march along that line, and capture that place. Its possession in our hands will force the Confederates out of Virginia, and confine the war to the 'Cotton States.'"

How true this was after-events demonstrated. The president committed the fatal blunder of accepting the plan and ignoring its

author. Over three years later we accomplished what Thomas projected, and the Confederate Government fell. As the venerable and now venerated Jefferson Davis wrote the year before his death, "Chattanooga was the key to the situation, and our only comfort after its fall was to see that the Federal Government did not know what to do with it." Blunders made the rule of action, and brain became a disqualification for command.

To Frémont not only belongs the credit of piercing the heart of the South in its water-ways with ironclads, which eventually cleared the Mississippi, but he was the originator of that line to Richmond on which Grant promised "to fight it out, if it took all summer." The unwritten history of this plan of campaign is curious.

It was while falling back, down the Shenandoah Valley, after the pursuit of Stonewall Jackson, which was rendered futile by General McDowell's refusal to co-operate with Frémont, that a talk occurred at our General's headquarters between Frémont, Carl Schurz, and Robert E. Schenck. Frémont was commenting on and criticising McClellan's advance on Richmond. He claimed it to be a military blunder; that our objective point was not Richmond, but Lee's army; that if Lee were driven out of Richmond, he would be driven back on his resources, and that the proper line was on the interior, where victory meant annihilation of the Confederate forces, for they would be cut off from their resources, and driven into the sea. Taking a map he traced the line that should be followed by our army to accomplish that purpose.

Some days later I found myself at Washington, bearer of important dispatches from General Frémont to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War. My business being accomplished Mr. Stanton honored me with an invitation to tea at his house. During this repast he asked me how I was "getting on under that little mountebank of the Mountain Department." The great war secretary's short lip had a way of curling up from his white teeth in a sneer that was an insult, and hurt and humiliated without a word to direct its meaning. I resented this, and said that Frémont had more military ability in his little finger than McClellan had in his entire body.

"That may be," and the gleam of the white teeth became more intense, "and not say much either. But what has the husband of Jessie done to impress you with his ability?"

I gave him Frémont's idea of an objective point, and how to reach it. This seemed at the time to have little influence on the war secretary. He went off discussing McClellan, and made one remark I remember vividly:

"This fellow with his gang is as busy as the devil impressing upon the men he is murdering to no purpose, that the abolitionists at Washington, as he calls us, have abandoned them to death in the swamps of the Chickahominy. We are to-day in more peril from the army of the Potomac than the rebels at Richmond."

This speech comes back with renewed force from the fact of its confirmation in "McClellan's Own Story."

The next day I was taking my leave of Mr. Stanton at the War Department, when he said, in his brusque way :

"What was that rot you were giving me last night about an advance on Richmond? Here, show it to me." And he pulled down a map of Virginia suspended from the wall in the office.

As near as I could I traced the line suggested by Frémont.

"It has common-sense to back it," was the secretary's comment.

And from that out, not only the secretary, but the president clung to what was in fact Frémont's plan of campaign. Had Pope been more fortunate he would have been called upon to put it in practice. It was given to Burnside, to be wrecked dismally at Fredericksburg. Hooker tried it on, and failed in the beginning. It was given Grant, and from the horrible slaughter of the Wilderness, when he was studying the art of war begun at Shiloh, as Hay and Nicolay tell us in their "Life of Lincoln," he announced that he would "fight it out on that line, if it took all summer." He, too, failed more dismally than anyone, and soon swung over to the line followed by McClellan.

In justice to these noble heroes of defeat, we have to admit that while the objective point given by Frémont was just, his approach to it was defective. Had Secretary Stanton ever studied the works of a man he was fond of praising at second-hand, Thomas Jefferson, he would have found, in his "Notes on Virginia," that an approach to Richmond from Washington, by the interior, was rendered extremely difficult by the topography of the country. The rivers of the State, flowing from the west to the east, and emptying into the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay, while affording easy approaches by water to the interior of Virginia, present to an army marching as Frémont indicated a series of obstacles, in which the banks of each river are natural fortifications for the defence.

The flank movement which would have been fatal to the Confederate army in Virginia, and so proved in the end, was that indicated by George H. Thomas in the spring of 1861. To have taken and held Chattanooga would have been to occupy Richmond and all Virginia without resistance. Even the dull-witted "Napoleon" McClellan had an inkling of this, for in his "Own Story" we read, page

102, under the head of "Memorandum," written and submitted to President Lincoln, August 2, 1861, as follows :

"As soon as it becomes perfectly clear that Kentucky is cordially united with us I would advise a movement through that State into East Tennessee, for the purpose of assisting the Union men of that region, and of seizing the railroads leading from Memphis to the East. The possession of these roads by us, in connection with the movement on the Mississippi, *would go far toward determining the evacuation of Virginia by the rebels.*

The italics are not McClellan's.

How we drifted in that war, without a head, suffering shameful disasters and bloody defeats from first to last, will make a history that would be humiliating but for the recorded heroism of a great people, and the patient endurance and high courage of the men under muskets, who really won the victory for us in the end, in spite of the imbecility that made every Union campaign a highway of human bones, sacrificed to teach stupidity the art of war.

"We have no generals," cried Stanton, "but we have men, and I will crowd them on until this infamous rebellion is stamped out. We can give three soldiers to their one, and win."

It was a war of attrition, and a dark, dreary track of desolations, nakedness.

Brain was not only at a discount, and made subservient to what we are pleased to call military education, but men of ideas, such as Frémont, were sneered at and set aside. It is a singular fact that the really successful men, such as Thomas, Rosencrans, and Buell, are neglected, while men who never planned a sensible campaign, or even a victory, are being lauded as great generals, and ornaments to our poor country. Small wonder that pilgrims from beyond our borders pass by our monuments, to hang immortelles upon the tomb of Lee. What are we to expect when we neglect our own true heroes for those whose records will not bear impartial scrutiny.

Frémont, when young, impressed his associates as one possessed of a destiny, and when old, as a man who had lived eminently through great events. And yet he was small of stature and rather retiring in manner and reticent of speech. He was mainly of French extraction and Huguenot blood. He retained, of the last, the indomitable will and force of character that made a class into a race of remarkable men, without any of the religious bigotry in him that made martyrdom a disagreeable necessity. It is to be regretted that he had not more religious feeling to steady his character and purify his life. In all financial affairs he was as indifferent as a child ; in-

deed, he has been charged more than once with criminal neglect by those unacquainted with the man's true character and mental strain.

He was thoroughly aware of his own weakness in this respect ; but lacked the power to correct what had become a fixed habit—a habit as clearly defined and as physiological in its hold upon him as alcohol or opium upon its victims. Up to the period of the Civil War he was one of the rich men of the country. Money to him was a medium whose exact value he had never considered and had never been forced to consider. It was like the water in the sieve of the careless Vestal. It ran between his fingers, was gone, he knew not and cared very little where. It was but a subtraction from infinity, and infinity remained. The idea of finality in his bank account never entered his head. When the shrinkage came it was simply incomprehensible to him. He could not and did not grasp the idea. The habit of spending had become as much a part of his nature as eating. Habit was a part of his mental and physical entity. Not long before his death, in the course of a conversation, he spoke very frankly of this subject. "I never knew the value of money," he said, "and I do not now. Nearly all my life I have had unlimited command of money. It was not necessary that I should consider or hesitate. Arithmetic was not kindred to finance in my experience. From this grew a real habit—a habit of spending money on impulse, without reference to credit or debit. It was a bad habit, I admit ; but one that was the product of a lifetime. It has grown so strong, so inveterate, that I have not the will to resist or correct it. I am too old. Had I been taught in my youth that a dollar represents a stated amount of mental or muscular exertion, that money is the equivalent of a factor of human endeavor, ambition, pain, or effort, it would have been different, and I should have been other than I am in many respects." Consider any human being under similar conditions, especially one by nature careless, generous to a fault, utterly ignorant of the commercial articles of faith, more willing to do a favor than to receive one ; an epicurean, to whom the morrow had no existence, a man to whom habit was the law and the prophets ; a kind, liberal, broad nature, whose chief fault was concentration of his mental and moral forces upon the moment, and that was Frémont.

We are a commercial people, and can forgive a man any and all offences against social order, provided he meets promptly his moneyed engagements. John C. Frémont was the most generous man with his own and other people's money I ever met. He would borrow at all hours large sums, and incontinently forget both loan and friend.

The writer of this became deeply attached to General Frémont

while serving under him in the Mountain Department. Once only the friendly relation suffered a strain. In our return from the pursuit of Stonewall Jackson I was sent back to fetch up the artillery, then much in the rear. I found it in a terrible condition. The wretched horses, worn to skin and bone, could scarcely drag their loads, and in bad places we had to put three or four teams to one gun or caisson. While thus engaged, with animals falling from sheer exhaustion, a splendidly equipped train came thundering along. The horses were not only fresh, but large, handsome animals. I called a halt, and found that the wagons were General Frémont's headquarters' train. To the consternation of the wagonmaster I seized the animals, and, transferring them to the artillery, left the exhausted hacks to get in the headquarters' baggage. With this aid we soon got up with the army. The next day I was summoned to appear before the little commander.

"Captain," he asked, sternly, "by what right did you interfere with my headquarters' train?"

"By what I supposed, General, would have been your order had you known the circumstances. I had to choose between your train and the artillery. I selected as I believed, and yet believe, you would have sanctioned."

The General bit his lip. He was in a rage, but, after a second, said:

"For your insubordination, sir, you deserve cashiering. For your care of the artillery you deserve promotion. We will let the one balance the other. I will add, from my knowledge of you, that I know you were more pleased at the opportunity given you to gratify your well-known insubordination than to the chance afforded to do extra duty. Don't try it again."

I did not have an opportunity; but, while lecturing me, he was of all the officers in command the most insubordinate. He made brigadier-generals and colonels at his own sweet will, and so organized his forces without regard to the regulations or the War Department.

Frémont was a man of not only high moral courage, but physical as well. I had a realizing sense of this at the battle of Cross Keys. This affair was fought by three brigades on our side, under Schenck, Milroy, and Bohlan. Blenker's division, which made the bulk of our army, fell out and went to coffee-boiling or plundering as soon as the battle began. It was about 3 P.M. when a strange cessation of firing occurred. We labored under the delusion that the Confederates were in full retreat. Having been reported home from Bull Run as among the killed, I rode out to a knoll, on which General Frémont

and staff had gone to get a nearer view of the field and make out, if possible, the movements of the foe. Dismounting, I gave my horse to an orderly, and, approaching General Frémont, asked permission to telegraph home. He told me to write my message and he would give me his signature. I took out my field-book, but had not written a word before all along the line the enemy opened an artillery fire, with, it seemed, a dozen guns trained on our knoll. One round shot killed a horse under an orderly in our rear; another plunged in the earth before us not two rods away. The numerous staff took no order in their going, and I was about following the sensible example, when I looked up and saw the General yet before me, waiting for that telegram. Of course we all know that a man has to die upon some proposition, and one is about as acceptable as another. But the deadly hiss of a round shot or the shrill scream of a shell makes death by artillery extremely unpleasant, to say the best of it. I saw, however, that my general was expecting me to do some writing then and there, and I did it. I cannot claim that my chirography under fire would serve for a common-school copy-book. Indeed, looking at it now, it resembles a cross between an inscription on an obelisk and that on a tea-chest, and would puzzle the profoundest scientist to decipher. I went through the necessary motion, and Frémont, taking the book, wrote "approved," with his name added. Then saying, "They seem to have our range, Captain," he quietly walked to the hollow where his horses stood in waiting.

It may be that there is an equality among men, as to ability, that escapes the common eye. I believe it was Bulwer who called our attention to the fact that while the moonlight illumines equally all the surface of lake or bay, to each looker-on is given one bright path, while all the rest seems lost in obscurity. The illumined path given to Frémont is extremely fascinating in its roseate tinge of romance. From the Pathfinder among the Rockies to the Pathfinder among political ways; from the conquest of California to the fierce little fight of Cross Keys, he is the same picturesque figure, appealing to the imagination from the hard and sad realities of life. In this he stands apart and alone. He has the poetry of an eminent career, and his adventures are tinted with the glow of fancy, so dear to the hearts of the masses. While to his dull, matter-of-fact cotemporaries, and their yet more stupid historians, he appears a misfit, to the multitude he will ever be a hero. President Lincoln, who had little imagination and less culture, but a profound knowledge of common human nature, laughed at Frémont; while the fierce War Secretary shouldered him brutally from command. Yet this

same man gave us California, crystallized the Republican party, as its first candidate for the Presidency, gave Grant, the inebriate, his first command, and his way to the head of our armies and the Presidency of the United States, through Forts Henry and Donelson ; and, last but not least, gave this same President Lincoln and his War Secretary a line of campaign that killed and crippled more men, between the Rapidan and Richmond, than Lee had in command. The grass is not yet green above the humble grave of Frémont, but those who knew and loved him can prophecy that his name will be woven into story and breathed into song, when the bravest monuments built to incompetent men shall have crumbled into dust, thus relieving humanity of any temptation to remember the unpleasant.

DOXX PIATT.

MAC-O-CHEE, OHIO.

ÆSTHETICS AND EATING.

THAT Hunger and Thirst should have been brought under control, even in the most moderate degree, or confined, however loosely, within the limits prescribed by decency and order, is a triumph of civilization which we are perhaps inclined to overlook, and a victory of mind over matter of which æstheticism may indeed be proud. To primitive man hunger and thirst were emotions of a high order ; their gratification a matter of no small moment : when he was hungry he ate ; when he was thirsty he drank. The *mauvais quart d'heure* was unknown to him, for if fire would not burn, nor water boil, he could eat his food raw, or at least amuse himself by extracting the marrow from any bones that might be at hand—remains of the last engrossing meal. Had his spouse, however (with that instinct for gentility inherent in her sex), endeavored to serve him his buffalo broth, fresh fish, and elephant steak in polite sequence rather than *en masse*, a break might have ensued in domestic harmony ; we are persuaded that the cave-dweller, however amiable, would never have consented to, or enjoyed, a dinner in courses.

Traces of this primitive appetite may be seen in our youthful gourmands of to-day ; a child must be taught to wait for its dinner, just as it must be taught to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth. But here civilized tendencies, become hereditary, take part ; the palate asserts itself, and jam is preferred to cold mutton. For it is hardly probable that the taste of the stone-age man was either delicate or discriminating ; like Charles Reade's piquant Australian abo-

